

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 2036

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM

REF: STATE 233134

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. WE HAVE GOOD AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH BULGARIAN OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS. CONTROL PROGRAM LIMITED HOWEVER BY ROLE OF BULGARIA SIMPLY AS EXPLOITED CONDUIT BETWEEN TURKEY AND WEST AND BY STATE OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. CERTAIN WARINESS ON PART OF BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES DICTATES AGAINST INITIATIVES THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE EXISTING COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IMPORTANCE OF BULGARIA IN NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM LIES SOLEY IN FACT IT IS USED AS ONE OF CONDUITS BETWEEN TURKEY AND WESTERN EUROPE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF BULGARIAN CONNIVANCE, ACTIVELY OR TACITLY, IN THIS TRANSIT TRAFFIC. ON CONTRARY, BULGARIAN CUSTOMS HAS SOUGHT TO INHIBIT TRAFFIC THROUGH MORE SOPHISTICATED AND THOROUGH CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AT BORDERS. THIS EFFORT LIMITED BY SHEER VOLUME OF TRAFFIC AND BULGARIAN HESITATION TO UNDULY HINDER LEGITIMATE COMMERCIAL AND TOURIST MOVEMENT, WHICH WOULD BE AGAINST BULGARIA'S INTERESTS.

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3. DRUG ABUSE IS NOT INTERNAL BULGARIAN PROBLEM. MOST COGENT ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THIS ASSERTION WAS ADVANCED BY CHIEF OF NARCOTICS DETECTION DIVISION OF BULGARIAN CUSTOMS WHO SAID THERE WAS "SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH MONEY AVAILABLE IN POPULATION TO MAKE BULGARIA ATTRACTIVE MARKET TO TRAFFICKERS," SO THAT SUCH PEOPLE COULD OBTAIN TREMENDOUSLY GREATER REWARD FOR EFFORTS BY SUPPLYING WESTERN EUROPE OR US. THIS COUPLED WITH PERVERSIVE POLICE CONTROL IN COUNTRY MAKES WIDESPREAD ADDICTION UNLIKELY.

4. STILL, BULGARIANS HAVE SHOWN CERTAIN WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH US, ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN CUSTOMS FIELD. MOTIVE APPEARS TO BE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF WORLD-WIDE ASPECTS OF DRUG PROBLEM AS WELL AS PRAGMATIC BENEFIT OF SHARING US EXPERTISE AND TRAINING WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO ALL-ROUND MORE EFFICIENT CUSTOMS SERVICE. US CUSTOMS HAS HELD TRAINING SEMINARS IN BULGARIA IN 1973 AND 1974 AND A THIRD COURSE IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR SPRING OF 1975.

5. ON OTHER HAND, BULGARIANS ARE WARY OF US MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES IN SEEKING EXPANDED COOPERATION. THEIR SECURITY SERVICES ARE AMONG THE MOST POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AND XENOPHOBIC ELEMENTS OF THE POWER STRUCTURE. THIS, PLUS FACT THAT COUNTRY NEITHER HAS NOR NEEDS NARCOTICS CONTROL ORGANIZATION ANOLOGOUS TO OURS, EXPLAINS BULGARIAN RESISTANCE TO PROPOSALS FOR IN-COUNTRY TRAINING SEMINAR CONDUCTED BY DEA.

6. COOPERATION AND US INITIATIVES ARE ALSO LIMITED BY THE STATE OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH THESE RELATIONS ARE IMPROVING, THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE ABOVE MENTIONED WARINESS AND SUSPICION WILL DECREASE TO POINT OF HAVING PRACTICAL EFFECT ON NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM. FACT IS THAT UNDER GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE COOPERATION THAT WE DO. BEST POLICY IS BUILD SLOWLY ON THAT AND AVOID ANY ACTIONS THAT WOULD JEOPARDIZE PRESENT ACCOMPLISHMENT.

7. IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING PRESENT CUSTOMS COOPERATION,
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PRACTICAL MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED INCLUDED PROVISION OF COLD STORAGE FACILITIES FOR UNLOADING PERISHABLE GOODS FROM INTERNATIONAL TRUCKING, NOW SUSPECTED OF CARRYING MUCH OF NARCOTICS PASSING THROUGH BULGARIA, AND OF X-RAY EQUIPMENT FOR INSPECTING VEHICLES. HOWEVER, THESE WOULD BE OF USE ONLY ON BORDERS AND MIGHT WELL BE MORE EASILY INSTALLED AND EFFECTIVELY USED ON BORDERS OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AMENABLE TO CLOSER COOPERATION

WITH US.
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